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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/926,505	11/13/2001	Urs Loher	215871US6PCT	6835
22850 7590 12/29/2006 OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			EXAMINER NEURAUTER, GEORGE C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2143	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	12/29/2006	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/926,505

Applicant(s)

LOHER ET AL.

Examiner

George C. Neurauter, Jr.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 September 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35 and 37-48 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35 and 37-48 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-35 and 37-48 are currently presented and have been examined.

It is noted that a new Examiner has been assigned to this case. Any future correspondence regarding this case should be directed to the Examiner listed below.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 22 September 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The Applicant argues that the combined teachings of Savage, Burridge, Jong, and Mauney disclose managing the steps of selecting, verifying, and interconnecting using only a single chat server. The Examiner respectfully traverses this argument. Savage clearly discloses that "Even if one were able to guarantee quality of service over the Internet, the bandwidth requirements of, for example, an audio chat room would not be amenable to the dedicated server approach currently employed. That is, a single text chat server can scale to thousands, even tens of thousands of users. However, because the bandwidth requirements of audio chat are roughly 100 times greater, a single server could only handle dozens (or at most a few hundred) users simultaneously. This is clearly inadequate given the user traffic of the large ISPs." (paragraph 0007)

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Therefore, Savage discloses the use of a single chat server and the combined teachings of Savage, Burrridge, Jong, and Mauney do disclose using a single chat server to accomplish the steps of selecting, verifying, and interconnecting.

The Examiner is also not persuaded that the claimed invention by using only a single chat server is advantageous in the respect that "the users need only each make one connection request, saving bandwidth and time". As shown above, Savage clearly discloses such a scenario and why it would not work in the manner as claimed. Savage does not teach away from the claimed invention since Savage teaches another way by disclosing how Savage's invention is an improvement over the prior art. It has been held that "the nature of the teaching is highly relevant and must be weighed in substance. A known or obvious composition does not become patentable simply because it has been described as somewhat inferior to some other product for the same use." See *In re Gurley*, 27 F.3d 551, 554, 31 USPQ2d 1130, 1132 (Fed. Cir. 1994) and MPEP 2123. Therefore, the Applicant's arguments regarding the patentability of a single chat server that handles all of the functionality as claimed are not persuasive.

Regarding the added claims 46-48, the Applicant has failed to specifically point out the support for the added amendments

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to the claims. The Examiner assume these amendments have proper 112 support, however, in order to avoid new matter and/or enablement issues, it is recommended by the Examiner that, within future correspondences, the Applicant show the corresponding page, paragraph, and/or line numbers within the specification for such amendments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-35 & 37-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over extensive consideration of the teachings of US Patent Pub. US 2001/0009014 A1 to Savage in view of US Patent US 6,430,567 B2 to Burrridge in view of US Patent US 6,173,250 B1 to Jong in further view of US Patent US 6,484,027 B1 to Mauney.

5. Regarding Claims 1, 12, 29 & 34, Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network, which method includes a chat

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server comprising a communications module for connection with telecommunications networks, (paragraphs #0003 & #0130) in which communication participants communicate with one another by means of communications terminals, (paragraphs #0011-0023 & Claims 1-55);

which server has a table in which information about communication forums is stored, (per pending Claim 12), (paragraph #0078 - "log file"), (Examiner further notes that Savage teaches dynamic creation and allocation of conferences among the media servers as facilitated by a single dispatch server wherein it would have been obvious to incorporate a table into said dispatch server for purposes of said dynamic allocation as said conference database tables are well known in the art, (see Krishnaswamy et al. below), (Examiner further notes that Burrige teaches registration and collaboration storage/repositories (databases), (Col. 7, lines 14-67 & Col. 8, lines 1-46), wherein information such as discussion topics, target participant groups, number of participants, temporal and geographical validity, expiration and language would have been obvious to store therein);

and which server has a command module that is set up such that it is able to receive and execute commands from the said communication participants, (paragraphs #0011-0023),

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the said command module enabling the said communication participants to select one of the said communication forums by means of the said commands, (paragraphs # 0012 & #0023);

the said communications module being set up such that it is able to interconnect at least two of the said communication participants who have selected a common communication forum for a round of communication, in which the said communication participants communicate by means of spoken language, (conferences), over a said telecommunications network, (Abstract; paragraphs #0007 & #0011-0013) wherein

- the command module is moreover set up such that it is able to receive over the said telecommunications networks said commands entered by the said communication participants by means of the said communication terminals, (paragraphs # 0011-0023).

6. Though Savage teaches a command module capable of management services, Savage does not specifically enumerate a chat server facilitating selection and interconnection. Burrige teaches a chat room server management functionality, (Col. 7, lines 14-67 & Col. 8, lines 1-46). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention by Applicant to incorporate the Burrige chat room server into the Savage conferencing system in order to

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facilitate user collaboration, (Burridge - Col. 1, lines 37-42). Examiner notes that Savage teaches a dispatch server and a media server for facilitating communication connections, (Savage - paragraphs #0016-0020), and Burridge teaches a chat server which manages chat messaging among all, (i.e.: obviously at least two participants - as two participants is the minimum number of participants required for a chat) wireless devices, (Burridge - Col. 4, lines 55-66; Col. 7, lines 14-67; & Col. 8, lines 1-46), wherein it would have been obvious to utilize the Burridge chat server to perform those functionalities already performed by one or more servers within the Savage system. Additionally, Savage teaches the ability to couple to a telecommunications network, (Savage - paragraph # 0130), such as the wireless network described within Burridge.

7. Though Savage teaches a telecommunication network capable of utilizing telephone technology which telephones obviously facilitate communication via spoken language, Examiner additionally cites Jong for Jong discloses a chat site wherein communication is initiated via a speech-controlled device, (Col. 5, lines 4-11). Examiner notes that it would have been obvious to use the Jong speech-to-text transmit system for purposes other than communication initiation, as said system serves to recognize spoken words and convert the same to text. Thus, the

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Jong speech-to-text functionality could easily be used in conjunction with a menu means for purposes of facilitating conferences within the system. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention by Applicant to combine the teachings of Savage and Jong to provide reliable, high quality communications over the dedicated connections of the public telephone infrastructure, (Savage - paragraph #0003). As a wireless phone network is a public phone network, it would have been obvious to incorporate the same into the telecommunication teachings of Savage. Additionally, Examiner notes that Burrige clearly teaches wireless communication, which obviously includes cellular telephones, (per pending Claim 34 - spoken language communication terminal), (Burrige - Col. 4, lines 55-66).

8. Though Savage clearly teaches a system conferencing capacity allocated according to agreements with customers, (i.e.: ISPs, etc.), who, in turn, provide access to the system to their subscribers, (i.e.: remote/wireless clients), via the ISPs websites, (Savage - paragraph #0012), wherein a subscription service clearly requires the storage of subscriber-specific information, and wherein storage of the same would have been obvious on a SIM, Examiner additionally cites Mauney which clearly teaches use of the well-known SIM with remote/wireless

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client collaboration, (Mauney - Col. 6, lines 8-30 & Col. 14, lines 6-30). Use of a SIM within the Savage system for mandatory verification of access conditions prior to interconnection between all clients, would have been obvious as Savage teaches a remote/wireless client and Mauney clearly enumerates the use of a SIM for remote/wireless clients, (Mauney - Fig. 4(b); Col. 6, lines 8-30; & Col. 14, lines 6-30).

Examiner additionally notes, "Burridge mentions user identification information", (Applicant's amendment dated 3 April 2006, p. 15), wherein incorporation of a SIM would have been obvious for remote/wireless clients. Thus, Claims 1, 12, 29 & 34 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burridge & Mauney.

9. Regarding Claims 2, 13 & 43, Savage, Jong, Burridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Jong discloses a telecommunications network wherein the subscriber terminals may be wireless telephones, (obviously on a wireless network, (Jong - Col. 2, lines 65-67 & Col. 3, lines 1-4), which subscriber terminals may participate in chat communication, (Jong - Col. 4, lines 57-58). Additionally, Burridge clearly teaches wireless communication and ISDN, (Burridge - Col. 4, lines 55-66), wherein use of a digital

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mobile phone network would have been obvious, (per pending Claim 43). Thus, Claims 2, 13 & 43 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

10. Regarding Claims 3, 14, 23, 33, 40 & 41, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network, wherein the communication participants select, via a menu structure, a communication forum from a list of defined communication forums or define a new communication forum, a defined communication forum being assigned a designation, designating for example a topic, (paragraphs #0011-0023, #0120 & Fig. 13). Examiner notes that the use of a menu (design) structure for conference/forum selection purposes by designation would have been obvious to incorporate within a conference-enabled web page and would obviously include any designation. Additionally, Examiner notes that SMS and USSD were well-known in the art at the time of invention by Applicant, (please see the Mills '225 and Seppanen '032 references cited herein below); and moreover, Burrridge teaches chat menus created via applets, (Burrridge - Col. 9, lines 4-30), within transmitted, (i.e.: uploaded), collaborative responses inclusive of applets, or

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application software, that allow a user to view and update information that is being shared by other users. As SMS was a well-known form of application software available at the time of invention by Applicant, use of the same for transmission purposes would have been obvious. Thus, Claims 3, 14, 23, 33, 40 & 41 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

11. Regarding Claims 4, 15 & 24, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network, wherein the menu structure is displayed on a display of the said communications terminals, and the communication forum is selected or defined by means of operating elements of the communications terminals, (paragraphs #0011-0023, #0120 & Fig. 13). Examiner notes that the use of a menu (design) structure for conference/forum selection purposes by designation would have been obvious to incorporate within a conference-enabled web page. Thus, Claims 4, 15 & 24 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

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12. Regarding Claim 5, Savage, Jong, Burridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Jong discloses a chat site wherein communication is initiated via a speech-controlled device, (Col. 5, lines 4-11). Examiner notes that it would have been obvious to use the Jong speech-to-text transmit system for purposes other than communication initiation, as said system serves to recognize spoken words and convert the same to text. Thus, the Jong speech-to-text functionality could easily be used in conjunction with a menu means for purposes of facilitating conferences within the system. Thus, Claim 5 is found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burridge & Mauney.

Claims 46 and 47 are also rejected since these claims recite substantially the same limitations as recited in claims 1 and 5 in combination.

13. Regarding Claims 6, 16, 31, 32 & 37-39, Savage, Jong, Burridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network, (paragraphs #0011-0023). Savage does not specifically enumerate communication forum participation limitations based upon assigned geographic area. Examiner notes that limitation by geographic distinction would have been obvious as such

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limitations are well known in the "chat room" art for purposes of chat room designation, participation and limitation. As Savage discloses a conference (chat) system, it would have been obvious to incorporate geographic limitations into the same. Additionally, Examiner notes that Burrridge teaches submission of client information to the chat server, (Burrridge - Col. 1, lines 66-67 & Col. 2, lines 1-26), (per pending Claim 31), which information would obviously include geographic location data determined by well-known means such as GPS/terrestrial-based or satellite-based receivers, (per pending Claims 32, 38 & 39), (please see Trovato '012 below); as geographical client data transmission is necessary for bi-directional/collaboration wireless communications, as taught by Burrridge. Moreover, geographic limitations are obvious and well-known, especially in wireless networks, as when one travels beyond the capability for receipt of network transmission, communication is obviously ended. Thus, Claims 6, 16, 31, 32 & 37-39 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

14. Regarding Claims 7 & 17, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network wherein access

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to a said communication forum can be denied to an interested communication participant, (paragraphs #0011-0023). Examiner notes that an interested participant may be denied in a number of ways, including non-validation, non-existence, or over capacity, all of which would have been obvious in light of the teachings of Savage. Thus, Claims 7 & 17 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

15. Regarding Claims 8 & 18, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network wherein the said communications terminals are interconnected for a said communication round by means of conference circuit, (Abstract & paragraph #0011). Thus, Claims 8 & 18 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

16. Regarding Claims 9, 19, 28, 44 & 45, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network wherein one of the said communication participants registers for a communication forum when no other communication participant

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has yet selected the respective communication forum, and a round of communication between the registered communication participant and at least one other communication participant begins when this at least one other communication participant has selected the respective communication forum, (Abstract & paragraphs #0011-0023), wherein a new communication forum is defined and a topic is assigned thereto, (per pending Claim 28). Additionally, Burrridge teaches selection of a chat room from a menu/list, (Burrridge - Col. 2, lines 7-18), wherein said list obviously includes chat room information such as topic data for both previously existing as well as new chat rooms. Moreover, in transmitting said menu to the client, Burrridge obviously teaches sending information on the common forum to at least one participant before interconnecting, (per pending Claim 44), wherein said information could be any information included in the aforementioned subscriber or network database, which information obviously includes geographic distances, language and number of participants, (per pending Claim 45). Thus, Claims 9, 19, 28, 44 & 45 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

17. Regarding Claims 10 & 20, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage is

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relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network. Savage does not specifically enumerate wherein one of the said communication participants registers for at least one communication forum specifying in addition at least one other communication participant as a communication partner for the respective communication forum, so that he is notified when a specified communication partner has selected a respective communication forum. Jong discloses a "chat" communication forum that includes lists of current chat participants wherein members may designate specific communication partners, (Jong - Col. 5, lines 57-67 & Col. 5, lines 1-34). Examiner notes that in designating a specific communication partner, said designee will obviously notify other participants of his/her interest to participate in the communication forum by his/her joining of the same, as noted by said list. Thus, Claims 10 & 20 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

18. Regarding Claims 11 & 21, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Savage discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating conferences between a plurality of participants on a network. Savage does

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not specifically enumerate wherein at least certain of the said communication forums have a temporally limited availability, however, the same would have been obvious in light Savage which teaches time stamping client conference participation. Examiner notes that Savage provides for a time-notification functionality in addition to a conference creation and deletion functionality wherein a temporally limited conference would be an obvious means by which to limit conference participation so as to not exceed server capacity, as a preventative means. Thus, Claims 11 & 21 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

Claim 48 is also rejected since claim 48 recites substantially the same limitations as recited in claims 1, 6, and 11 in combination.

19. Regarding Claims 22, 27 & 42, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein. Burrridge discloses a wireless communication network, which network could obviously be a well-known GSM or a UMTS network, (Burrridge - Col. 4, lines 55-66), (also please see Trovato '012 below). Thus, Claims 22, 27 & 42 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

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20. Regarding Claims 25, 26, 30 & 35, Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney are relied upon for those teachings disclosed herein.

Savage discloses authorizing the at least one communication participant to the communication forum by requesting a personal access code entered by using said at least one communication terminal, (per pending Claims 25 & 35), (Savage - Fig. 1 & paragraphs #0047-0051), wherein said access code is obviously stored at a communication terminal as subscriber ID data, (per pending Claim 26), (Savage - Fig. 1 & paragraphs #0047-0051), and wherein said personal access code is checked in accordance with information of the table, (per pending Claim 30), (i.e.: Burrridge - registration information database - Col. 7, lines 52-63), (Savage - Fig. 1 & paragraphs #0047-0051). Thus, Claims 25, 26, 30 & 35 are found to be unpatentable over considerable consideration of the combined teachings of Savage, Jong, Burrridge & Mauney.

Conclusion

The prior art listed in the PTO-892 form included with this Office Action disclose methods, systems, and apparatus similar to those claimed and recited in the specification. The Applicant should consider these cited references when preparing a response to this Office Action.

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Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George C. Neurauter, Jr. whose telephone number is 571-272-3918. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9am-5:30pm.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wiley, can be reached on 571-272-3923. The fax phone number for the

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organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

gcn


JEFFREY PWU
PRIMARY EXAMINER